

WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

1 1. A communications method, comprising:
2 enabling instant messaging communication between a sender and at least one
3 recipient through an instant messaging host; and
4 enabling video communication between the sender and the recipient through
5 the instant messaging host.

1 2. The method of claim 1 further comprising receiving and authenticating a text
2 instant from the sender at the instant messaging host.

1 3. The method of claim 2 wherein authenticating comprises identifying a screen
2 name associated with at least one of the sender and the recipient.

1 4. The method of claim 3 wherein authenticating comprises identifying an IP
2 address associated with at least one of the sender and the recipient.

1 5. The method of claim 1 further comprising determining capabilities of the
2 recipient at the instant messaging host.

1 6. The method of claim 5 wherein determining comprises identifying hardware
2 associated with the recipient.

1 7. The method of claim 5 wherein determining comprises identifying software
2 associated with the recipient.

1 8. The method of claim 5 further comprising reporting the capabilities of the
2 recipient to the sender.

1 9. The method of claim 8 wherein the sender displays a user interface according
2 to the capabilities of the recipient.

1 10. The method of claim 1 further comprising receiving, at the instant messaging
2 host, a request to establish video communication.

1 11. The method of claim 10 wherein the request is from the sender.

1 12. The method of claim 10 wherein the request is from the recipient.

1 13. The method of claim 10 further comprising authenticating the request.

1 14. The method of claim 13 wherein authenticating comprises identifying
2 a screen name associated with at least one of the sender and the recipient.

1 15. The method of claim 13 wherein authenticating comprises identifying
2 an IP address associated with at least one of the sender and the recipient.

1 16. The method of claim 1 wherein enabling video communication comprises
2 establishing a generic signaling interface channel, a control channel, and a video channel
3 between the sender and the recipient.

1 17. The method of claim 16 wherein the control channel comprises a TCP/IP
2 socket.

1 18. The method of claim 16 wherein the video channel comprises a UDP channel.

1 19. The method of claim 16 wherein the video channel comprises a TCP channel.

1 20. A communications apparatus comprising an instant messaging host configured
2 to:
3 enable instant messaging communication between a sender and at least one recipient;
4 and
5 enable video communication between the sender and the recipient.

1 21. A computer program, stored on a computer readable medium, comprising
2 instructions for:

3 enabling instant messaging communication between a sender and at least one
4 recipient through an instant messaging host; and

5 enabling video communication between the sender and the recipient through the
6 instant messaging host.

1 22. The computer program of claim 21, wherein the computer readable medium
2 comprises a disc.

1 23. The computer program of claim 21, wherein the computer readable medium
2 comprises a client device.

1 24. The computer program of claim 21, wherein the computer readable medium
2 comprises a host device.

1 25. The computer program of claim 21, wherein the computer readable medium
2 comprises a propagated signal.